

Our View

# Keep act to help domestic violence victims rebuild

*Local shelter, program use funds to provide transitional housing*

This is no time to halt a federal program that is working.

The Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA, is set to expire Sept. 30, and Congress must step in quickly to extend money as well as leadership on the issue of domestic violence.

Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave of Colorado's Fourth District has offered her support; her colleagues should follow suit.

Federal VAWA grants provided more than \$3.45 million to Colorado domestic violence projects in the past year, including money for Crossroads Safehouse and the Alternatives to Violence program to open transitional housing units for victims in Fort Collins. The units allow women who turned to the shelter in crisis the additional time to rebuild their lives in a secure environment.

The act also provides money to pay for legal representation, emergency shelters and victim advocacy programs.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the rate of intimate partner violence has been reduced nearly 50 percent from 1993 to 2001. That is a testament to increased public awareness about domestic violence, but also to the effective use of resources to help victims return to productive lives. Applying federal money to help women who have been removed from violent situations also avoids shifting the fiscal burden to local law enforcement agencies.

Allowing the Violence Against Women Act to expire would be irresponsible because the problem, while receding, has not disappeared. For example, four women in Northern Colorado were killed by their partners in the past year. That is reason enough to continue the act.